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STRINGS ATTACHED TO THE NEW OPERATING CONCESSION AT THE ZURICH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Sandor Galambos 02/28/2001

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Summary: The Swiss Federal Government is expected to grant Switzerland's principal international airport, the "Airport Zurich Ltd.," also dubbed "Unique Zurich Airport," the overall operating concession, which will go into effect June 1, 2001. The proprietor of the Zurich airport contacted the Federal Department of Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) in December 2000 to apply for the operating license. End Summary

At the same time, the operating ordinance, governing current approach and departure routes as well as the use of runways, is to be temporarily extended. This has become necessary due to the absence of a new government contract/air traffic agreement with German authorities, governing take-off and landing provisions over airspace in southern Germany. The yet to be established government contract with Germany will be critical in determining future approach and departure routes.

The operating ordinance, currently in place, is only to be modified upon securing a government contract with German authorities. This is why the environmental impact study is not to be addressed at this time. Any changes of the ordinance will be carried out in a separate process, with the possibility of lodging complaints to the Federal Court. However, new stipulations, effective June 1, 2001, are to be incorporated into the current ordinance, passed by the Federal Court in December of last year. They are:

- Scheduled charter flights will not be permitted to take off after 10 p.m.;
- The proprietor of the Zurich Airport (Unique Zurich Airport) is responsible to measure nitric oxide emissions stemming from aviation activities;

- The Unique Zurich Airport is furthermore responsible to ensure that all technical as well as economically feasible measures be provided to reduce nitric oxide emissions. If the annual volume of 2,400 tons is reached, Unique Zurich Airport is compelled to come up with measures on how to deal with the issue. Recommendations are to be made with the Federal Government. If the airport fails do so, imposing a ceiling of air traffic would be considered as an option in an effort to curtail pollutant emissions.
- The curfew for landings is to be extended from 5 a.m. until 5.30 a.m. The Federal Office for Civil Aviation (FOCA), headquartered in Bern, is to rule in a separate process whether or not to extend the curfew for night flying activities at the Zurich airport from 11.00 p.m. until 6 a.m.

If additional information is sought, please contact:

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